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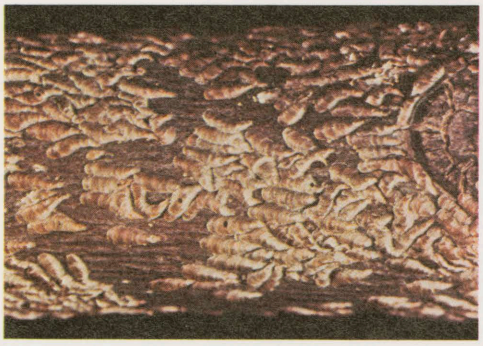
Common Tree and Shrub Pests

Cooperative Extension South Dakota State University

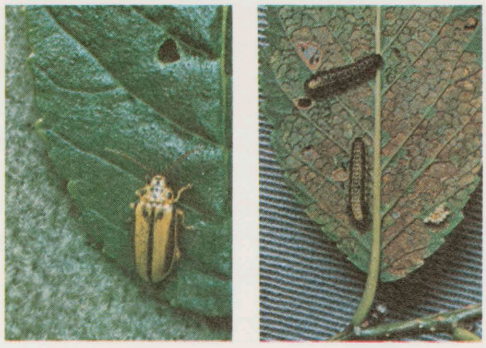
COMMON TREE AND SHRUB PESTS

For safe and effective use of insecticides, always identify the problem correctly.



1. Oystershell scale

5. Pine needle scale



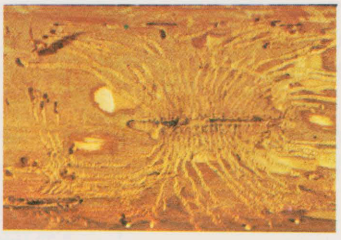
8. Elm leaf beetle and larvae

2. Maple bladder gall

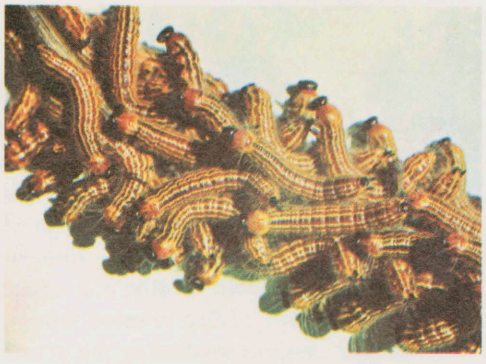
6. Bagworm

9. Eastern tent caterpillar

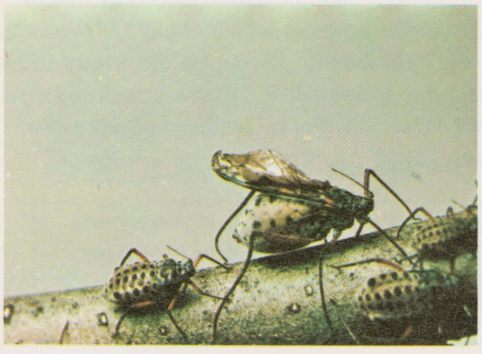
3. Flatheaded borer



7. Smaller European elm bark beetle and galleries



10. Yellow-necked caterpillar



4. Aphid

11. Spruce mite injury

Prepared by Extension Entomologists of the North Central States in cooperation with the Federal Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

FS 399 COMMON TREE AND SHRUB PESTS

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1. Oyster Shell Scale

Attacks ash, dogwood, poplar, redbud, privet fruit trees and many other shade trees and shrubs. There is one generation a year in South Dakota. Scale matures in late summer, lays eggs and the adult dies. Winter is passed as white eggs beneath the dead female scale. Crawlers, upon hatching, move to a suitable feeding site and firmly attach themselves to the branches. Scale then sucks sap which weakens and may eventually kill the tree or shrub.

2. Maple Bladder Gall

These galls are small wart-like growths on leaves of soft maple. Galls are caused by mites that overwinter in buds of trees. As buds break in the spring mites start feeding on developing leaves causing injury. The presence of galls does not appear to hinder the vigor of the tree although they are unsightly.

3. Flatheaded Borer

These borers are among the worst pests of deciduous trees and shrubs. Many are killed by this insect in nurseries and fields. Borers are especially destructive to trees during the first 2 or 3 years after planting. Winter is passed in the grub (larva) stage and pupation occurs in the spring. Adult beetles then emerge and lay eggs for a new generation.

4. Aphids

There are numerous species of aphids or plant lice. They attack shade trees, fruit trees, ornamentals and shrubs and they feed by sucking sap, often causing curled or twisted leaves and damaged flowers. Aphids are small soft-bodied insects and different species exhibit different shades of green, red, black, etc. Honeydew production is associated with aphid feeding and oftentimes molds grow on honeydew, giving infested foliage an unsightly appearance. Besides weakening the plants by their feeding, some aphid species carry virus diseases from one plant to another.

5. Pine Needle Scale

Infested trees often have somewhat yellowed foliage with enlongated, whitish scales, (1/8 inch) attached to the leaves. Scale attacks pines, spruces, firs, cedars and hemlocks. Insects overwinter as tiny, purplish eggs underneath the gray parent scale. Eggs hatch the next spring and crawl to a feeding site to establish themselves and secrete a new scale.

6. Bagworm

Of little or no economic importance in South Dakota but in states where abundant, it attacks practically all deciduous and evergreen trees.

7. Smaller European Elm Bark Beetle

These stout reddish brown beetles (1/8 inch long) feed on twigs and crotches of healthy elm branches. During this feeding disease spores are deposited which infect the tree with dread Dutch Elm Disease. Female beetles construct their brood chambers in cambium of weakened, drying or recently dead wood. The parent gallery is 1 to 2 inches long; and holds 80 to 140 eggs. Larvae feed beneath bark and overwinter in galleries. Adults emerge in spring about the time lilacs bloom.

8. Elm Leaf Beetle

The elm beetle attacks all species of elms. The adult (about 1/4 inch long), is yellowish to olive green with a black sometimes indistinct stripe along the margin of the wing covers. Eyes are black and the antennae and legs are yellowish. Full grown larvae are 1/2 inch long, dull yellow with two black stripes down the back. Both adults and larvae severely skeletonize trees by feeding on the underside of the leaves. This insect overwinters as an adult beetle.

9. Eastern Tent Caterpillar

This insect passes the winter as a dark-brown collar-like egg mass securely attached and often encircling small twigs. Eggs hatch early in the spring as soon as leaves begin to unfold. Caterpillars gather near a fork in the limbs and establish their colony. Larvae from several egg masses may gather in the same colony. Trees attacked include: wild cherry, apple, plum, peach, oak, willow, poplar and others.

10. Yellow-Necked Caterpillar

This pest attacks many fruit trees or ornamentals. It feeds in large colonies and young caterpillars skeletonize the leaves. As they grow larger, worms consume all leaves except the mid ribs, passing the winter as a naked brown pupa in the ground.

11. Spruce Spider Mite

Yellow sickly needles, some of which are covered with a fine silken webbing, indicate the presence of this spider mite. The adult female is greenish-black about 1/64 inch in length. The young are pale green. They pass the winter in the egg stage on the twigs and needles. Plants attacked include: spruce, arbor vitae, hemlock, juniper and all pines. Damage usually occurs in early spring.

For further information on control of these pests consult your local county extension office or the Extension Entomologist, South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota 57007

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